

REVIEWS

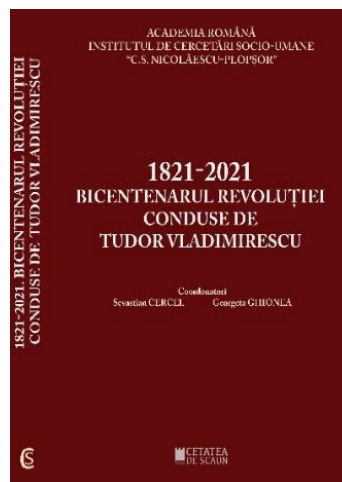
Sevastian Cercel, Georgeta Ghionea (coord.), *1821–2021. Bicentenarul revoluției conduse de Tudor Vladimirescu (1821–2021. The bicentennial of the revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu)*, Târgoviște, Cetatea de Scaun Press, 2021, 296 p.

The volume called “*1821–2021. The Bicentennial of the Revolution Led by Tudor Vladimirescu*”, accomplished under the aegis of the Romanian Academy, includes the works of the national symposium with the same name, organized by “C.S. Nicolăescu Ploșșor” Institute for Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities, from Craiova, between May 14–15, 2021. The scientific event took place within an ample program initiated by the team of researchers from the Institute of Craiova, for the solemn celebration of Tudor Vladimirescu's personality and of the Revolution of 1821, in the year that marked the passing of two centuries from the event that signified the beginning of the process of the national rebirth of Romania.

The volume brings to the attention of the general public the rich historiographical treasure regarding the personality and the behaviour of the statesman Tudor Vladimirescu. More than an arch over time, the initiative of the researchers from Craiova was intended to be a spur to knowledge, towards the assimilation and the consolidation of the historical data, but especially to the settling down of the rich historical information on its normal course, the one that could lay the foundations of a robust, argumentative, and often very critical, thinking.

The 22 studies and articles included in the volume are signed by researchers and professors from research institutes in the research system of the Romanian Academy and prestigious universities: “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History – Bucharest, “C. S. Nicolăescu-Ploșșor” Institute for Research in Socio-Human Sciences and Humanities – Craiova, “George Barițiu” Institute of History – Cluj-Napoca, the University of Bucharest, the University of Craiova, Valahia University – Târgoviște, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University – Iasi, Ovidius University of Constanța, Institute of History within the Ministry of Education and Research, Chișinău. Structured in three chapters – *The Conceptual and Symbolic Dimension of the Revolution of 1821; A Social History of the Revolution of 1821: Elites, Military, Conflicts; Contemporary Stories, Local Memoirs, Monuments, Reverberations* – the work brings to the readers complex approaches to the one that marked a milestone in the history of Romania and laid the foundations of a new historical stage – the modern era.

In *the Foreword*, the president of the Romanian Academy, acad. Ioan Aurel POP, pointed out the two great important moments in the historiography of the event, which have remained fundamental works to this day. One is Constantin Aricescu's monograph, elaborated in 1871, that is exactly half a century after Tudor's revolution, and the other is the



work of Andrei Vinegarea, who, in 1921, analyses, with special consideration, the data and the facts of 1821. “Tudor Vladimirescu has always been a subject of remembrance for the institutes of the Romanian Academy. It is good to always remember the great historical personalities. That is even if history does not help us predict the future, as it is sometimes believed. But it certainly helps us to better understand the present, and this is no small thing. Thus, it is good to strive to teach, those who forget the advantages of collective memory, that Tudor Vladimirescu occupies a privileged place among the heroes of this people from the Modern Era, he being among the architects of Romania”, states acad. Ioan Aurel Pop in the Foreword of the work.

From the very beginning, the authors start from a consensus validated by the entire historiography: the Revolution of 1821 was not an isolated event, and the events already consumed at European level were favourable to the triggering of the national liberation struggle of the Romanians. Thus, the social and economic wishes of most of the social classes were justified and found a strong echo in Tudor Vladimirescu's revolutionary action.

In the first chapter, *The Conceptual and Symbolic Dimension of the Revolution of 1821*, there are presented the arguments by which Tudor can be considered a genuine modern defender of citizens' rights and freedoms, his legal acts and deeds having an undeniable force in what would later be the public law, of the general interest. On addressing the flag worn during the Revolution of 1821, it is stated that its symbolism, in the context of that time, was one of invigorating significance. Symbol of cohesion, unity, brotherhood, the flag would bear a significance proportional to the revolutionary impact. In this chapter, there are also addressed topics regarding: self-awareness, reflected in the revolutionary programs of the Romanian modernity, the relations between Greeks, Aromanians and Romanians during the revolution of 1821, very close but quite little known ties, then the actions of Eteria and the motivations that formed the basis of the birth of this secret organization, as well as topics regarding the armed resistance through the system of fortified monasteries, or the human behaviour and the civic engagement.

The second chapter of the work, *A Social History of the Revolution of 1821: elites, military, conflicts*, brings together studies and factual analyses regarding the participation of the Pandurs in the Russo-Turkish war of 1802-1812, the road of the People's Assembly from Țânțăreni to Bucharest, the battles of Drăgășani and the surroundings, in June 1821, etc. The experiences of those times are depicted from the interpretation of the archival documents, and of the most accurate understanding of the events, especially since the pre-revolutionary social aspects were the ones that substantiated Tudor's actions.

Elements regarding the skills of a military leader, but also of how Tudor Vladimirescu knew how to capitalize on the details of the moment and to found his own army, are described, with accuracy. Furthermore, in this chapter, there are recorded details about the great boyar families from Vâlcea, as is the case of those from the Otetelișanu family, through the prism of the relations with the Oltenian pandur, as well as the role of some cities near Bucharest, in particular, Târgoviște, in the events of 1821, etc.

The last chapter of the work, *A Social History of the Revolution of 1821: Elites, Military, Conflicts*, accumulates a kaleidoscope of reflections on the elements of historical

connection with the year 1821. Here, there are gathered scientific studies of varied themes, from the reflection of the historical event from 1821 and of Tudor Vladimirescu's personality in literature and theatre, to the local cultural memory of the revolution led by the pandur from Oltenia.

The events in Wallachia at that time are rendered through the prism of French travellers who visited our country: François-Charles-Christian Recordon and F. G. Laurençon. At the same time, in this chapter, there are also mentions about the close relations developed between Tudor and Iancu Jianu. The latter, known in history through the prism of his outlaw deeds, is related to the emancipation movement of 1821, embracing the cause of Tudor Vladimirescu since the beginning, and the becoming a panduri captain in the "People's Assembly", and a diplomat.

About the tragic destiny and the last words that belonged to Tudor we also find out in this chapter. And, beyond being a myth, Tudor is a Man, a Hero. The typology of the national myth, even if it can be applied to the hero of 1821, and the sum of his deeds of re-placing the social dynamics on other foundations in accordance with what was already happening in most of Europe at that time, cannot ignore the limits and conditionings of the time and the general condition of that moment. As, equally real are the images of his dwelling, rebuilt after the original one. Analysed from an ethnographic perspective and its historical value, the current Tudor Vladimirescu memorial house is given the well-deserved status of a monument of traditional architecture.

As it happens in the history of any people, all those who have made their mark over the centuries on social reform have subsequently received a recognition, we could say, also through the commemorative monuments placed in many localities or through the toponymic wealth related to these great personalities. Such aspects are addressed at the end of the volume, with special reference to Tudor Vladimirescu, a personality who changed the history of the Romanians at that time.

The present volume proves to be a fulfilment of a sacred duty, that of permanently researching the rich national historiographical treasure, of building an ever-present bridge between generations and of making known the historical truth, with balance and pertinent updates. The hero of Vladimiri remains in our memory as the symbol of a tragic destiny, of a fighter for a noble cause, aimed at the fundamental reformation of the social order at that time, when the venality of the Phanariot class and the enslavement of the common people had reached hard-to-bearable levels. If only for the simple reason that he was aware of the consequences of his actions, on a personal level, and at an age when many others may have thought only to preserve their wealth, if not to increase it, the martyr Tudor chose to become a living legend, written with the supreme sacrifice in the history of the Romanians.

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